



Testimony by Estela Lopez, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
Board of Regents for Higher Education
Before the Commerce Committee
March 3, 2015

Senators Hartley and Frantz, Representatives Perone and Camillo, and members of the Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on ***HB 6916, An Act Concerning Job Growth and Education***

For the record, my name Estela Lopez, and I am the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for the Connecticut State College and University (CSCU) system, comprised of 17 public institutions of higher education in this state.

The Board of Regents opposes HB 6916 because it duplicates efforts already, and continually, underway.

Transform CSCU 2020, our long-term strategic planning initiative, has a section devoted to labor needs and workforce programs. This initiative is designed to generate an ongoing inventory of academic programs needed by Connecticut businesses in specific sectors, to produce the workforce required to meet their needs, and to help us develop an understanding of programs that will produce high caliber graduates for those businesses.

We are committed to providing academic programming and workforce training that is in line with the demands of employers. Over the last several years you have seen this commitment in action with the expansion of our advanced manufacturing centers at 4 institutions around the state. It is also visible in partnerships being created between 2- and 4- year nursing programs to provide community college students with a clear path to a Bachelor's degree – a credential employers are now demanding. At the graduate level, we are seeking to provide applied professional doctoral degrees in fields where these degrees are the new entry level requirement – such as for nurse anesthetists.

We are close partners with the Department of Economic and Community Development. Commissioner Smith is an active and involved member of the Board of Regents, and we know through continual conversations with DECD that allied health, advanced manufacturing, information technology, hospitality, and financial services are five areas of expected growth in this state. We have the responsibility to serve these anticipated needs.

Our mission as public institutions in Connecticut, as well as our viability and future success depends on our ability to react to workforce demands. We will, of course, continue to do so.

If you have any questions regarding my testimony, please contact Kyle Thomas, Legislative Program Manager, at 860-723-0017 or at thomask@ct.edu.